

## Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ADP-00 OC-06 CCO-00 M-03 A-01 DODE-00

RSR-01 RSC-01 /023 W

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P R 081025Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5697

INFO DAO SAIGON

UNCLAS SAIGON 14329

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC

SUBJECT: APO PRIVILEGES FOR RETIRED U.S. MILITARY

FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

1. SENATOR ABOUREZK HAS WRITTEN EMBASSY C&R OFFICER, PAUL MERIGHI, CRITICIZING LATTER FOR HAVING "DELIBERATELY PREVENTED A CITIZEN OF THE U.S. FROM COMMUNICATING WITH ME (THE SENATOR) ON THE GROUNDS THAT THAT CITIZEN WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO UTILIZE THE APO. EVEN THOUGH HE IS A VETERAN."

2. SENATOR ABOUREZK'S LETTER GOES ON TO SAY THAT MERIGHI'S "INTERVENTION IS OPEN TO THE INTERPRETATION THAT IT WAS NOT PROMPTED SO MUCH BY CONCERN FOR THE OBSERVATION OF MAIL REGULATIONS AS BY THE POLITICAL CONTENT OF MR. SLADE'S LETTER TO ME... IT OCCURS TO ME THAT THIS MAY NOT BE THE ONLY INSTANCE IN WHICH THE U.S. EMBASSY IN SAIGON HAS INTERFERRED IN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A U.S. CITIZEN THERE AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. MY SUSPICION IS THAT THE SUBJECT WOULD MERIT CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION." SENATOR ABOUREZK'S LETTER CONCLUDES BY DEMANDING AN EXPLANATION BY THE END OF THE AUGUST SESSION AND WITH THE STATEMENT THAT HE IS GREATLY CONCERNED THAT MAIL TO A U.S. SENATOR "IS BEING CENSORED IN A LAND IN WHICH WE PAID SUCH A HIGH COST PRESUMABLY TO FURTHER DEMOCRACY."

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3. FACTS ARE THAT PAUL MERIGHI DID HIS JOB, BY FOLLOWING APO REGULATIONS. WHEN LETTERS IN QUESTION CAME TO MERIGHI'S ATTENTION HE SAW BY THE LOCAL RETURN ADDRESS THAT IT WAS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER MR. SLADE WAS AUTHORIZED TO USE THE APO FACILITIES. MERIGHI WROTE SLADE AND ASKED HIM TO COME TO THE EMBASSY TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. WHEN SLADE MET WITH MERIGHI, HE PROTESTED THAT AS A RETIRED U.S. MILITARY OFFICER, HE WAS ENTITLED TO APO PRIVILEGES. A PHONE CALL TO THE APO CONFIRMED THE FACT THAT DAO POLICY HERE DOES NOT EXTEND APO PRIVILEGES TO RETIRED MILITARY, SLADE LEFT IN A HUFF, AND MERIGHI PASSED THE LETTER TO THE APO FOR APPROPRIATE HANDLING. THE APO, WE UNDERSTAND, SENT IT TO THE VIETNAM POST OFFICE FOR RETURN TO SLADE'S LOCAL ADDRESS.

4. THE DAO HAS TAKEN ACTION ON SENATOR ABOUREZK'S LETTER AND HAS INDICATED THAT IT WILL REPLY DIRECTLY TO HIM, EXPLAINING DAO POLICY ON APO PRIVILEGES. IN THE MEANTIME, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PROVIDE INTERIM RESPONSE BASED ON PARA 3 ABOVE. WE HAVE INSTRUCTED MERIGHI NOT TO REPLY TO THE SENATOR ON THE GROUNDS THAT DEPT. SHOULD HANDLE SUCH QUERIES RELATING TO AN OFFICIAL ACT. COPIES OF PERTINENT CORRESPONDENCE AND FULL PARTICULARS ARE BEING SENT BY NEXT AVAILABLE POUCH.  
MARTIN

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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